97-84027-14

Lee, T. F.

Behind the "smoke screen"--Mexico

[Flatbush? N.Y.]

[1920]

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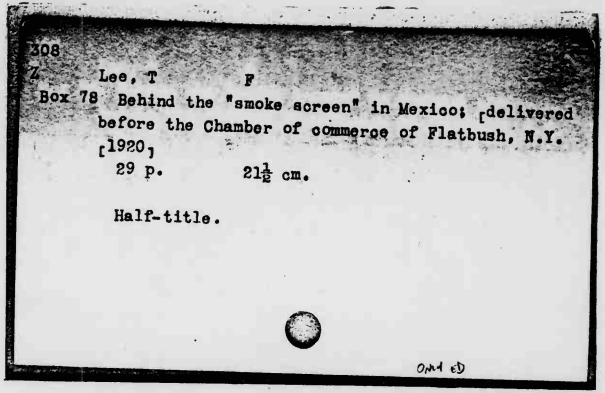
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Z Lee, T F
Box 78 Behind the "smoke screen" in Mexico; [delivered
before the Chamber of commerce of Flatbush, N.Y.
[1920]
29 p. 21½ cm.
Half-title.

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TECHNICAL MICROFORM DATA

FILM SIZE: 35mm REDUCTION RATIO: 11:1 IMAGE PLACEMENT: IA (IIA) IB IIB

DATE FILMED: 2-26-97 INITIALS: MS

TRACKING # : 21782

FILMED BY PRESERVATION RESOURCES, BETHLEHEM, PA.

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Gift of the President
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BEHIND the "SMOKE SCREEN"— MEXICO.

Delivered
Before the Chamber of Commerce
of Flatbush, New York
by
T. F. LEE

21 April 1920 Sun

Behind the "Smoke Screen"—Mexico

THE "Smoke Screen" was used during the great war for the purpose of obscuring fact and delaying action. In a little different form but with the same befogging effect it is being used today along the Rio Grande. It hangs between the American people to the North and the Mexican Nation to the South. It obscures a question that is ours to answer. It adds complexity to a problem which demands solution.

It is a bewilderingly composite thing—this "Smoke Screen"—made up of ignorance of racial inheritance, character and ideals—of impractical theories—of "watchful waiting"—of the diplomacy of a John Lind—of the Bolshevism of a Lincoln Steffens. Distilled altruism is there—political prescriptions of international quacks—healers, trying to fit a cure to a disease they have never diagnosed, for a patient they have never known. Where the smudge of the "screen" is thickest, are the words—torrents of words—volumes of words written into books by well-meaning but ill-informed dabblers who have had but the briefest view of Mexico or her people—who ignore or disdain fundamental facts and causes, to dawdle over unripe theories relating to things they have never known and could not understand.

These are but a few of the elements which give

density to the "Smoke Screen" along the Rio Grande —slight wonder that the things we see behind it are distorted and unreal.

In this country we have reached a point wherein we recognize individual habits, thought and character, but as a nation and a people we have not yet reached a stage where we will admit that there might be a difference in National thought, character and ideals.

We measure every other people with the same yardstick that we apply to our own. If they fall short or run over length—that is their fault and we forever condemn them. We have never yet recognized that government is a very fair reflection of the character and desires of the governed. We would impose, willy nilly, our form of government upon a Hottentot tribe, a Chinese province, a group of Mexican Communes or the Tartar hordes of the Ukraine and expect an immediate, perfect and satisfying fit. In other words, we have been accepting and reacting to the psychology of our own home people, but we have ignored the psychology of other nations.

This may be said with compelling truth of our Mexican relations. As a government and as a people we have judged them, we have reasoned about them and we have planned for them as if the Mexican people and the Mexican government were like our own. Until we learn and know that the Mexican character, the Mexican thought-habit and the Mexican ideal are to us unknown quantities—until we realize that his social relations—his religious

ideals—his racial traits and, in consequence, that all of his conclusions are utterly at variance with our own—not until then are we even prepared to understand this problem—much less to suggest its solution.

I went into this country nearly twenty years ago. I spent a number of years in the employ of the Mexican government. I speak and "think" in the language of the people and I am immodest enough to suggest to you that after years of intimate relationship with this people, after years of unbroken study of their character, thought-habits, institutions, government and ideals, I know some of the basic facts from which they may be judged and from which our relation with them may be determined. That is why it has been suggested that through this experience we should be able to peer through this baffling screen, confront facts—look the Mexican situation squarely in the face. When this is done, when the American people know the truth, I am willing to leave our future government policy to their insistent demand. I believe in the ultimate, right conclusions of our people once they know facts, for the overwhelming power of this government of ours is based upon the premise that "you can't fool all of the people all of the time." Our strength is in the inevitable tendency of our majority to blunder through on the right side.

About 400 years ago Cortez and a little band of pirates and brigands climbed up to the Mexican plateau, found and subdued a race of people who had passed from savagery to the middle stage of barbarism—Aztec—Toltec—Zapotec. They were a

numerous, sturdy and intelligent people far above the Red Man of the North. There were also the many Indian tribes. The two outstanding characteristics of this people were, fanatical religious beliefs and the practice of extreme cruelty, both peculiar to barbarian culture. The Spaniards settled here—developed farms and mines—used the Indian as his beast of burden and intermarried with the Aztec class. This intermarriage produced a distinct third race inheriting the tyranny, the pride and selfishness, the moroseness and the fighting spirit of Spain—the vision, improvidence, cruelty and care-free hopefulness of the native. It was a bad mixture. It didn't guarantee much in the way of a peaceful, constructive partnership.

Now follow closely: For 300 years this mixed race lived under a series of so-called governments—despotisms of the lowest governmental type, designed solely to suck all substance from the governed and to prohibit anything which might enlighten or uplift them; for ignorance, superstition and fear are foundation stones upon which autocracy of this character is built.

At the end of 300 years these people had been taught that government is for the few and that the masses are but a means for creating and contributing greater wealth to the ruling few. They had been taught that government is a highly centralized power organized for the purpose of inspiring fearful, unquestioned obedience. They had not the dimmest concept of self-restraint—not the faintest glimmer of self-government

Then came the great accident of Mexican independence and out of a mass of inert, illiterate, political nonentities, drilled in the customs and vices of petty despotism, saturated with fear and superstition, with their racial inheritance from Spaniard and Aztec,—tyranny, cruelty, improvidence, fanaticism—Mexico thought to build a Republic.

No wonder her failure at self-government has been misunderstood by our people. No wonder when we measure her acts by our own and her government by ours we reach a conclusion that is as unsound as it is absurd. A democratic form of government can only suit a nation which has sufficiently developed individually and politically to understand and operate it. Today the vast majority of the Mexican people is still living in the barbaric stage of culture. They are 75% Indian and 80% illiterate. Six millions of them do not speak the official language of the country. They are as unfitted for a democracy as our own ancestors would have been 400 years ago. Today if you will chip off the thin veneer of civilization that covers the average Indian bandit or "revolutionist," you will generally find, not a designing criminal but a savage who prefers the wild life of hills and woods to the comforts and well being of civilization provided he must accept with these the restrictions and discipline of civilized life.

In 110 years of "freedom" Mexico has had less than 40 years of peace—more than 70 of war—revolution—disorder. Revolution is the normal state of Mexico. It could not well be otherwise because the bullet and not the vote is the recognized medium for settling political difference. It is the code of the

country that a man who fails at the polls must fight, otherwise he is politically dead. There were 57 varieties of revolution in 57 years—but nothing so distressing—nothing so deplorable—nothing so infinitely degrading to national character—nothing so pitiable has ever been fastened upon a people as the present revolution, headed by the Dictator of Mexico today—self-appointed and maintained in office by a system of banditry in his own land and by the sufferance and moral support of our own government.

In Mexico today there are probably 12 million illiterate, poverty-stricken peons—80% of the population of that country. They don't know why they fight—they don't care to know. They have no special hatred for the United States or any other nation. They are only interested in the problem of existence—they are simply doing what they are told to do by their jefe, just as they have done for four centuries. They are fighting instead of working because that is what their master wishes them to do, and too, it gratifies the craving of three centuries' desire for loot, rapine, and the exercise of a cruelty that you and I can't understand.

Carranza today is collecting 160 million dollars annually from men who built industrial Mexico. He is taking the income from railways owned by American and British citizens without turning over one cent to the owners or paying one nickel to the holders of bonds. He has confiscated, destroyed or ruined millions of dollars worth of property belonging to your neighbor and mine—American citizens. He has levied tribute upon the industrial enterprises of that country until mines, sugar mills, plantations,

lumber camps and cattle ranges are gutted ruins or devastated fields. Industrial Mexico is dead,—her railways and rolling stock are practically junk—every fount of income has had its stream turned into the loot-chest of this man. I say—from the above sources Carranza gathers 160 million dollars annually and 120 million he spends to maintain an army to buy for himself the distinction of being the most shameless despoiler this oft-ravished country has ever known. His people have received nothing from a government that has stifled education—made pest places of hospitals—destroyed civic buildings—and made of civil law and common justice a sardonic joke.

General Alvara Obregon spoke to a large crowd of Mexican people in the Hidalgo Theatre of Mexico City the night of February 2d. His speech as reported in the Mexican newspapers contained these statements:

"While justice is measured by money in our country it will never be within the reach of men who live on wages that are only enough to buy a plate of beans.

"The penal colony is not large enough to hold the poor man who steals bread; but bandits travel through the streets in luxurious automobiles—fruits of their own systematic robberies.

"There will be no justice in Mexico so long as school teachers have to live on charity, while the mistresses of bandits pass them, flaunting jewels."

Revolution seems to boil up the scum—Bela Kun in Hungary—Lenine and Trotsky in Russia and Carranza in Mexico.

A petty tyrant who stables his cavalry in the churches of his country—who would rather promote a pillaging army than a public school—who sanctions the murder, outrage and defilement of American women—who encourages the murder of American citizens and the confiscation of American property—who prompts the wholesale murder of the clergy of his country and condones the defilement of scores of nuns of the religious institutions of the land he assumes to rule—this is the ruler of Mexico today—the nominal ruler, placed in his high office by reason of our own assistance—kept there by reason of our tolerance and he—Carranza—meanwhile losing no chance to strike the hand that holds him in his place.

There is no government in Mexico today as we know government. Villa controls a section of the country. Diaz another. Palaez another, and other minor chieftains other lesser portions; and of this whole territory, Carranza, and his 160 million dollars and his organized bandits controls the principal towns and such stretches of railway as are still possible to operate.

"Death to the Gringoes!" has been the slogan with which he has rallied his so-called "generals,"—and graft—unbelievable graft is the glue which holds his army loosely together. No such emotion as patriotism has ever swelled in his breast.

Now then: We are side by side with a neighboring people whose government is the most corrupt ever known—a country whose leaders conceived the spirit of Bolshevism,—that now popular theory of taking thru fear of murder, pillage or rapine what

another may possess. For a thousand miles or more we touch a country whose ruler has permitted the wanton murder of more than 550 American citizens —who has winked at the outrage of more than a score of our own women and who has held our rights in such contempt that he has not offered to make reparation for any one of these murders or atonement for one outrage—who has deliberately confiscated or destroyed American property running into the hundreds of millions for which to this date there has not been the slightest reimbursement—a ruler and a government which has flouted, ridiculed and derided our own government.

Have you forgotten the Jenkins case? Does your heart swell with pride when you recall his imprisonment and the subterfuge thru which he was released?

Do you recall that when Ambassador Fletcher was appointed in 1916 he waited months before he could go to his post on account of Mexican conditions and when he did go, do you remember how he was hissed and insulted in the Mexican capital?

We are geographically side by side with this country and face to face with this problem. We can't move and our neighbor probably won't. Other than keeping up a sustained barrage of talk, argument and theory, what are we going to do?

The Mexican problem and the Mexican situation today is largely of our own making. The Mexican people from peon to Dictator will react only to a firmness of purpose which they can understand. They have been governed four centuries by

the fear of what may happen if they violate some despot's law. To them hesitancy is fear. Our patience is translated by them into cowardice. Our forbearance inspires their contempt. Naturally they reason this way because in all their centuries of experience the man who did not strike when he had the advantage was AFRAID to strike. The man who would not protect himself was a COWARD.

My friends, it's about time for us to measure the Mexican character and the Mexican government with a yardstick which fits them. It's about time for understanding and truth. It's about time for the American people to rise up with something akin to indignation and demand, from our own Government, a policy of firmness and justice toward this bandit administrator of government, until with the fear of God and Uncle Sam in his heart he will observe the rights of our people, guard the lives of our citizens —respect the sanctity of our women—conserve the property rights of our people and observe the decencies which one civilized people have a right to expect from another. Nothing but the fear of just punishment promptly administered will enforce consideration from this revolution-mad people, with the astigmatism of racial inheritance blinding them to our own real character, intents and purpose.

Once let it be known that the violation of American rights in Mexico will be followed by swift retribution and those same rights will thereupon be respected—the American citizen will then know a respect and security for his life and his property that he has not felt for ten years.

It humiliates me to tell you that for years the American when in danger in Mexico has often found safety by declaring himself to be a German or British citizen and it shames me to tell you that during the period wherein 550 Americans were murdered in Mexico, only one German was molested. He was killed in a railway station, but in his case there were extenuating circumstances—they thought he was an American.

Now let me tell you three short stories pointing out wherein this vital subject touches you personally and let me suggest the remedy:

Last week we wrote letters to each of 2,577 men in our own middle west. They were just ordinary citizens — farmers — merchants — school-teachers— doctors. Some 15 years ago when our Mexican policy was a thing to respect and Mexico a safe place for American life and money, a man went into that country south of Vera Cruz, at the invitation of Mexican Government officials. He picked out and contracted to buy from a private owner a tract of rich land. He came back to the middle west and more than 2,500 men pooled their little savings— some $1,500 each, to make up a sum sufficient to buy and develop this tract of land. They took it over and reclaimed it from the jungle. They planted thousands of acres of sugar cane. They built a great sugar factory. They employed 2,000 Mexican peons whose social condition they lifted to a plane which they had never dreamed. They created millions of taxable wealth for that nation. With their own skill, courage and money they made something out

of nothing. Up to eight years ago they were giving to the world each year 11 million pounds of sugar—then it happened: Four of their men were murdered. Their property was destroyed. Their sugar fields were burned. Now this was no "soulless corporation"—not a bunch of millionaires—just 2,500 American citizens like you and me who had pushed into the waste lands of Mexico to carry on the work of the pioneer.

The pioneering instinct is still alive in most of us. The same compelling force which carried our forefathers over the Appalachians to develop the middle west still flares up in the breasts of a million of our people today. It is the splendid, unconquerable spirit that has spread a network of railways from coast to coast—turned waste places into farms and ranches—built magic cities and over them hung the smoke of a hundred thousand factories. It is the splendid spirit of construction in place of destruction. It was that same spirit carried into Old Mexico by 50,000 men and women and turned to the building of railways, irrigation systems, power plants and smelters—the spirit which touched a jungle and made of it an oil field—which turned forests into lumber camps—waste lands into farms, cattle ranges and sugar plantations—rough mountain sides into coffee groves. It was the spirit which shot into the industrial life of that country the first rich, red blood of enterprise it had ever known. I have never met a braver, cleaner lot of men working for an ideal than this group of pioneers. The American in Mexico was as a rule contemptuous of money. He was stimulated by the elixir of creating some big and

worthy thing out of the crude, raw resources of an industrially new country. He never saw Mexico as it was—his vision glimpsed it as it might be.

Mr. Doheny was an oil man. He went to Mexico some 20 years ago to investigate the possibilities for oil development in that country. The British had drilled for it and had abandoned the effort in disgust. Mr. Doheny went to the Mexican government and said: "If you will give me the right to look for oil, I will contribute all of the money, skill and experience needed. I will do the work subject to your laws, of course, and pay the tax which may be imposed." President Diaz agreed to this and Mr. Doheny went down to the Gulf coast, while Mexican geologists in the capitol jeered at the crazy gringo. He bought a large tract of land from a Mexican landowner and paid him for it in cash. He spent money like water and brought to the work the best skill and experience the oil fields of America held. He succeeded. He built refineries, pipe lines and invested millions of his own money.

Carranza came into power because of our own government's support. He looked upon the property owned by the Americans and coveted it. In trying to take it he came face to face with the old Constitution of 1857, under which Americans had made their investments—a constitution, by the way, modeled upon our own. It was in his way so he tore it up and made a new one of his own. In Article 27 of this new Constitution he provided that only Mexicans by birth have the right to own land in Mexico, or to obtain franchises to develop mineral oils and

fuels in the Republic, and this constitutional provision became retroactive.

Acting under this a few months ago, Carranza ordered all American companies to stop drilling—took their tools and sealed them up. *YOU* helped pay for this—you personally—for the United States paid a billion and a half dollars last year—$75 per family—because Mr. Carranza is dictator of our neighboring Republic, and because our Government's policy has not protected our sources of foreign supply. You and I are in a measure responsible because Carranza was put in power by a government we helped make. He is held there by the same power and today because of this continued policy or lack of it, Carranza is able to take from the American in Mexico anything he desires from life to property.

Let me interject a word about concessions right here: The word is misleading to us. In Spanish it means one thing—in English another. In Mexico it means a charter or right to do something or to buy something. It is a formal permit for which you pay a heavy stamp tax. There is nothing free about it. It is the popular impression in this country that a concession is a form of giving away something of value in which the public is interested, and by certain interests this impression has been fostered. I have never known an American in Mexico who ever got anything for which he did not pay a little more than full value. When the men who bought land, opened mines, built smelters, developed oil fields received their concession, they got a charter or permit allowing them to spend their own money pro-

vided they put up several hundred in stamp tax for the privilege of so doing.

Last year we used 60 million barrels of Mexican fuel oil. If those barrels had been placed head to head they would have reached one and one-quarter times around the globe. We used 300 million gallons of gasoline from Mexico last year. We are dependent upon this supply—even with it our shortage is more than 30 million barrels. It was this enormous reservoir of oil piped to the allied navies which made it possible to carry American troops to Europe—American food and supplies to our Allies. It was this oil more than any one other great factor which won a world war; and this we did in spite of the fact that Carranza did everything in his bitter pro-German way to prevent our so doing. In December and January from 2c to 4c per gallon was tacked on to the price that you paid for gasoline. Your dealer didn't do this—Mr. Carranza did—his long fingers reached from Chapultepec to your pocket. When Americans were forbidden to drill on their own property their old wells soon began to go to salt. The supply of gasoline fell off a million gallons a day. There wasn't enough to go around—you had to pay more for it.

Where is your fuel oil supply coming from? We are not producing enough in this country to supply our own yearly demands by more than One Hundred Million barrels. I mean that after we have brought Sixty Million barrels from American wells in Mexico and Three Hundred Million gallons of gasoline from the same source, we are still shy Thirty

Million barrels. Now, will we stop industrial development? Will we forsake the dream of a merchant marine and of a world export trade? This we must do unless fuel oil in vast quantity is available. We can hardly expect England to develop oil producing regions of the earth and haul the oil to us for the purpose of building up competing industries and developing a competing merchant marine,—nor may we expect it of any other great power. This supply can only be made available by fearless American men, armed with experience, skill and money, who elect to go into the deserts, jungles and by-ways of the earth in quest of this liquid fuel that has become such a vital factor of our nation's development.

Gentlemen, I urge you to believe me when I say that American men and American capital cannot enter this field of foreign development unless our ancient principle of protecting American property rights and American life is again made a salient principle of our governmental policy.

But the most pitiful case of all is not that of the men who formed themselves into company groups for united development. The pitiful case is not the oil man—rather it is any one of thousands of the 50,000 Americans who took their families and their savings and upon the invitation of the Mexican Government bought little farms throughout the republic. Gentlemen, I do not know personally of a single farm today that is still being operated by its American owner. He has either been run off, murdered or he has declared himself to be a German or British subject for sake of safety. Just one little case will illustrate hundreds of others equally important.

Mary Correll went with her husband and her son from Ada, Oklahoma, to a little farm they had bought south of Victoria, Mexico. They cleared away the jungle and built a little home. They were becoming independent. Last July fifty bandit soldiers rode up to their little house. They looted it—then they held the woman and her son so that they were compelled to witness the murder of the father. Murder of the boy was then attempted, but he broke loose, escaped the shots and dodged into the brush. The mother was then outraged in a manner too revolting to tell. Now get this: Neither the Mexican government nor our own offered any assistance and in time the woman and the boy found their way back to Oklahoma—penniless—homeless. Gov. Robertson sent a drastic message to Washington. In time the wreck of a woman told her story to the House Rules Committee—that was all—nothing was done. Only I forget to mention that during this time Mary Correll's other son was serving his country overseas—making the world safe for democracy. Safe for democracy! An alluring phrase—a fascinating thought. But I want you to know with what earnest vital meaning I speak when I suggest that the time has come and passed and come again to make the world EVERYWHERE safe for American citizens.

One additional but compelling thought: In these days, when the cost of living is swelling beyond our ability to pay, let's get down to this fundamental fact. Beef is high because there is not enough to go around. Shoes are high because leather is scarce. Do you remember when you bought 20 pounds of sugar for a dollar? Sugar is costing you four times

that today because the supply is limited. Gasoline, kerosene, and fuel oil are high because the world today is not producing enough to supply its insistent demand. Because all meat is scarce the herds of sheep of this country have been used for mutton, the supply of wool curtailed and the price advanced. Here is the thought: United States has no more great cattle ranges—it does not supply its own demand. Northern Mexico is a vast cattle range. It is the natural supply point for half a continent. In the day when our government policy made life in Mexico safe and industrial activity possible, millions of cattle came to our stockyards and millions of hides came to our tanneries. Beef and leather were plenty —steak and shoes were cheap. But beef and bandits cannot run on the same range. Of recent years only straggling herds have crossed the Rio Grande. Only a short time since Mexico was shipping millions of pounds of sugar, giving one of the staple products of the world at a price within reach of all. This was before the time of Carranza. He has effectually changed all this and today the charred ruins of burned sugar mills dot his unhappy country.

Gasoline has doubled since revolution in Mexico and will probably advance 20% this year,—the gas and oil shortage is troubling the industrial leaders of this country. If our investments abroad cannot be protected, where will we get the oil and gasoline to meet our enormous shortage and what will we be compelled to pay for it?

Coal famine, sugar famine, prohibitive cost of beef, shoes, wool, gasoline, copper and even silver—the question of Mexico, Carranza and our govern-

ment's policy,—these are questions that are directed at you. They are personal—pertinent—persistent. They demand an answer. The shadow of our Mexican policy is standing beside you when you buy your daily beefsteak—when you fill your flivver—when you bought your winter overcoat—when you begged for a pound of sugar a few weeks ago—when you negotiated for your $20 pair of shoes.

In its greater aspects the danger threatens the existence of our merchant marine because 90% of the fuel oil used for this purpose and for industrial purposes on this Atlantic coast comes from American oil wells in Old Mexico.

We are today the greatest creditor nation on earth,—probably the greatest export nation in the world. In 1890 our bulk of export was in foodstuffs —raw products. Today it has changed to that higher form of export,—manufactured products. The markets of the two Americas should be ours. The great initial steps to secure this have been taken—the fostering of a merchant marine and the extending of banking facilities into Latin America. Our nation is today standing at the cross roads. It has the opportunity to become the greatest commercial and financial power on earth or it can slump back into the position it occupied 30 years ago. England and Germany acquired commercial supremacy throughout the world by sending their people into foreign countries with money, skill and enterprise. South America was developed largely by these nations and South American trade rightfully became their own.

During the years from 1900 to 1910 more than

50% of the foreign trade of Mexico came to this country in spite of makeshift banking facilities and unfavorable government policies, because 50,000 of our own citizens were in that republic using and creating a natural demand for American goods and teaching the native to demand them.

The American has genius for organization and development. He takes the rough mold as nature left it and fashions from it skillful-hewn utility to serve the use of men. As he built railways in Mexico, he made markets for American steel rails, cars and locomotives. As he developed sugar plantations, he created demand for American machinery; as he opened farms, American implements were in demand. One of the most powerful stimulants to foreign trade is the demand which is created by our nationals abroad.

In a political platform which in 1912 helped to put a party in power, is to be found the following paragraph:

> "The constitutional right of American citizens should protect them on our borders and go with them throughout the world, and even Americans residing or having property in any foreign country are entitled to and must be given the full protection of the American government both for themselves and their property."

This principle meant success in foreign trade. It is the very basis on which foreign trade is built; but the Secretary of State who came in on that platform said American citizens hounded out of Mexico: "From the time you crossed that river,

United States lost all interest in you and owed you no further duty." It was "open season" for Americans in Mexico. They were murdered and robbed. They straggled back in thousands, ruined; but—although the American Secretary of State had lost interest in them, there came a time when this great Government looked to Americans below that same river to furnish fuel oil to carry men and guns to France—to win the world's great war.

And then there's another effect which strikes even deeper into your heart and mine: It is the sense of humiliation—of bitter shame which comes over you and me with the realization that an American Ambassador may be subjected to insult at the hands of a Mexican Congress—that our Consul can be imprisoned at will by a Mexican government—that our American citizens can be murdered without the criminal feeling the immediate force of a retributive justice—and that American women can be defiled by loathsome brutes acting under the authority of the head of a government with whom we are theoretically at peace and that all this may be done—has been done repeatedly without rousing more than puerile, futile diplomatic protest on the part of our own people or the men who represent them.

You are no more in accord with this policy than I am. Your blood tingles with the same resentment that I feel and your sense of honesty, justice and right demands that the American people through their government formulate a policy of firmness and justice in dealing with this Mexican problem that will command for American citizens the wholesome respect

of Mexico's erstwhile government and of all other governments of the world.

Armed intervention—I do not believe that is necessary. Thinking men, who know Mexican character and who have had long experience in that country, feel the same way. It is true that for ten years we have led the Mexican government to believe that no matter what happened, we would do nothing. It is true that we made two abortive forays into their territory and by withdrawing confirmed their suspicions that we were afraid of them; it is true that the American citizen who goes abroad today in his own interest or in the interest of his own government has a great deal to overcome before he can command the respect which is his due, but even this may be counteracted by determining upon a fixed, definite policy, a firm, just dealing with the outlaw element of a people who have visited upon us everything of violence, contempt, indignity—who have flouted and derided our government and its accredited representatives.

The Philippines and Cuba point the real solution of the Mexican problem. The Philippines offered many similar aspects to the case presented by Mexico. The Philippines were but a collection of tribes speaking many dialects, filled with furious jealousies, utterly disorganized and upset by revolution and with no glimmer of the meaning of self-government. They hated Americans and despised any of their own who began their schooling with the idea of becoming of real use. We won there because we were right. The change in this people has been

miraculous. What was done there was done in our inexperience—today we might work the miracle of the western world in Mexico. The question is not one of imposing government upon an unwilling people; it is a question of permitting them to assume the first steps in self-government under a protection that would save the masses from the unscrupulous despotism of the few.

Cubanization of Mexico is the real answer, for Cuba is closer example of American altruism and the effect of American governmental aid.

For years Washington has dealt with Mexico's mockery of government as if its representatives were honest patriots struggling for a just cause, instead of the scum of a race, looting a people whom they had betrayed and overawed.

Mexico will only be a breeding place for chaos, anarchy and bolshevism until some strong moral force —some outside force—reaches into that unhappy land, pulls together the ravelled threads of government, places them in the hands of such capable men as may truly guide and represent the real Mexican people and then stands back of such constituted government with every force necessary to protect its own citizens as well as the alien within its bounds.

In this way only can a once great people be restored to peace and sane living—in this way only can a once great nation regain its credit and a world's respect. But while our own and international thought is being directed to the Cubanization of Mexico, let's do the practical, immediate thing nec-

essary to protect your rights and mine, whether we are in Brooklyn, Oshkosh or Mexico.

As I used to come back from Mexico on the Old Ward Line steamers and as we sailed up the bay and into New York harbor a little group of us were generally crowded on the forward deck to get the first glimpse of familiar sky line—the first glimpse of a flag, that comes to mean so much more to the man who has lived outside his own country. I remember how a little prickly shiver would run up my backbone and how a dimming mist always floated before my eyes as I caught the first glint of that flag on our own soil. It meant something that was deeper than home life—far deeper than any of our petty dealings with men, something that was elemental—compelling. In those days it meant to me safety and protection wherever I might be.

During the early part of the great war we kept out of it. Some said we were too "proud to fight"—others said that we were afraid to fight—that there was a "yellow streak" in us and a yellow stripe in our flag. Then we got into it. That same flag crossed the seas to the battle fronts of France. If the thing they said was true—if there was a yellow stain on it—the blood of 50,000 of our boys washed it out. I only know that when it came back it was the same old wonderful, clear-dyed red, white and blue that had always made us thrill with pride.

Gentlemen, this same piece of bunting symbolizes your protection here in New York. It guarantees that if you keep your contract with the government, that same government will fulfil its duty to

you. Out in Omaha that same thing is true. It holds true way out in 'Frisco and over in France.

And now I'm ashamed to tell you the rest—I'm ashamed to tell you that down below the Rio Grande there's a land where that same flag stands for something else. Bandits spit on it, trample it under their guaraches and say that the yellow is still there. Our own citizens—brave, clean men and women—following the same honorable, useful callings of Americans at home, have in hundreds of instances during the past few years suddenly turned the corner of the day's work and stood face to face with death at the hands of some bandit assassin. And then with simple, sublime faith they turned to their flag, sure of its protection, only to find that it stood for something else in Mexico.

Ambassador Fletcher resigned last week because, after a life in our public service, he could no longer bear up under these conditions. Last summer George Agnew Chamberlain, our Consul General in Mexico, gave it up—sickened with the hopeless futility of it all—the horror—the blindness—the injustice of it. He came here to New York and wrote this true story of conditions as they are, taking characters from real life for the characters of his book, which I hold in my hand.

Ellerton, Digby's partner, had been captured at the little mine which they had developed and had been carried off to a jacal in the mountains. His finger was cut off and sent to his partner with a request for ransom. Ellerton was without food; his finger was infected, and when Dick, his partner,

reached him, the arm and body of the man were in a hideous condition; he was dying from gangrene. One of the last speeches he makes I wish to read to you:

> "But Dick, my friend, just remember that you've been listening to things which all of us know but which hyprocrisy can't say; to the tongue of death that never lies. As for me, something passes more than this transitory body that I tried so hard to keep clean, and which is so vile now, so far on the road to rust and putrefaction. Something else passes; something else dies—the faith of a once great country."

You will never know just what I mean until some friend of yours has been backed up to a mud wall and murdered while those who loved him are made to stand and look at it. You will never quite understand until these things come home to you time after time—hundreds of times. You will never quite comprehend the bitter significance of it until you have seen thousands of your own kind—American citizens, not only robbed of their material things, but robbed of their ideals—their faith, their belief and their pride in a flag and a land they have been taught to reverence.

Tonight I am appealing to you, with all the deep compelling earnestness within me, to put yourself on the side of those Americans who believe in and who stand for the protection of the rights of our citizens wherever they may be.

It isn't something new, I'm asking—it's a plea for the reassertion of that fundamental principle and

policy for which until recent years we have always stood. It's a principle that is bigger than a party platform—greater than the call of class or creed—it's the bed-rock of a democracy—it's the base upon which our citizenship rests. This is an appeal to you to bring this policy back into being—make our flag stand for the rights of our citizens—for their safety and protection wherever they may be on earth.

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